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**US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District**

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Yankee Engineer

June 2008

District, MEPA to coordinate environmental review of South Coast Rail Project

**by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will conduct a coordinated review of an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental

Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the South Coast Rail Project proposed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOT) to determine its environmental impacts.

EOT is seeking a Corps of Engineers permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to discharge fill material in up to 14 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, incidental to establishment of commuter

rail service between Boston and New Bedford and Fall River, Mass. They are also seeking an environmental review and permits from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that the lead federal agency in an environmental review make a determination whether an environmental assessment or EIS is

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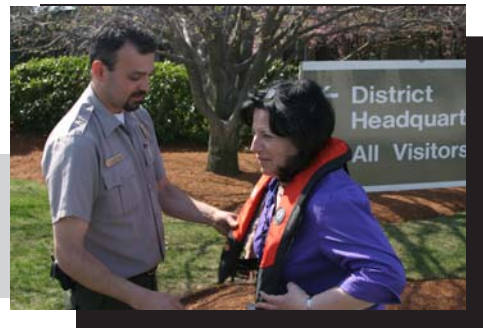


Feathered residents enjoy day at Canal

This adorable family of Canada Geese stroll around the area near the Cape Cod Canal Field Office taking in the sights. The two parents have nested near the office for the past three years and are currently caring for their latest gaggle pictured here. *(Photo by Kevin Burke)*

Yankee Voices

Park Ranger Steve Patchkofsky
and Joan Gardner



Stay hydrated when exercising

Healthy, properly functioning muscles are composed of more than 70 percent water, according to Dr. Dan Bernardot, author of, "Nutrition for Serious Athletes."

When you exercise, it's important to maintain that level of hydration. Failing to do so can not only reduce performance but make your muscles less resilient, thereby increasing the risk of muscle pulls and tears.

The Mayo Clinic advises that men consume about 13 cups of fluids each day and women about nine cups.

You should increase that amount with an extra one or two cups of water for short bouts of exercise, but you may need two to three cups an hour for intense exercise lasting more than an hour such as marathons.

Researchers suggest drinking water before and after exercising and during longer events. (*Ideas Unlimited*)

FDA Warning: Take pain relievers with a dose of care

Before you open your medicine cabinet to take out an over-the-counter pain reliever, there are a few things the U.S. Food and Drug Administration wants you to know.

If you take acetaminophen – such as Tylenol, Datril, and other brand names – you should be aware that taking too much could cause serious liver damage. Acetaminophen is usually a safe drug when taken appropriately. However, numerous problems can arise as soon as you deviate from the directions. To avoid an accidental overdose, make sure you follow the dosage instructions on the bottle. If you're taking any prescription medications, check with your doctors to ensure that your prescribed drugs don't include acetaminophen and won't interact adversely with acetaminophen.

If you take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen, you're at risk for a different type of internal damage. These drugs (brand names include Bayer, St. Joseph's, Advil, Motrin, and Aleve) have the potential to cause gastrointestinal bleeding when misused. If the drug is taken only intermittently, the risk for bleeding is low. But if the drug is taken on a regular basis, the risk increases. People who take NSAIDs should consult their healthcare professionals if they have kidney disease or are taking diuretics or prescribed medications.

The bottom line for over-the-counter painkillers: Follow the dosage directions, take the label warning seriously, exercise caution, and consult your healthcare professional if you have any concerns or questions. (*Ideas Unlimited*)

Congratulations

...to **Kristine (Penezic) McBreen**, ACE-IT, and her husband, John, on the birth of their first child, son Brian Christopher, April 28.

...to **Karen (Tryon) Hoey**, Park Ranger at Franklin Falls / Blackwater Dams on her marriage to Bob Hoey on May 17.

...to **Brad Clark**, Park Ranger at Hopkinton-Everett Lakes, and his wife, **Heather**, on the birth of their first child, son, **Connor James Clark**, May 18.

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Commander's Corner:

Col. Thalken's farewell message to the District Team

by Col. Curtis L. Thalken
District Commander



It has been a great honor for me to serve with you and help make both the people and environment of New England safer.

For instance, the District has helped to shape the national implementation of US-ACE and FEMA's National Levee Safety Programs. We have weathered three dramatic storm events (fall of 05

and the springs of 06 and 07) and last year we completed the District's first efforts to assist communities in the repair of levees damaged by these storms under Public Law 84-99.

Likewise, the District has successfully enacted its first

two In Lieu Fee arrangements to provide enhanced mitigation for impacted waters of the U.S. Throughout these efforts and many more, you have dealt with uncertain and diminished funding, reductions in the size of our available work force and an increased sense of urgency to deliver projects "on time and under budget." In this my last article, I would like to pass on some final observations and challenges for the future.

When I was a brand new Second Lieutenant Platoon Leader at Fort Devens, my first Platoon Sergeant, Sergeant First Class Bruce Dukes, told me I would only need to know four things to be a good civil engineer and as silly as this may sound there is a lot of truth in these simple facts. Each has an analogy in the things we do every day here in the New England District as we strive to protect the citizens and environment of New England.

First; "you can't push on a rope." The concepts of "two force members" (go back to your undergrad Statics Class),
continued on page 9

Deputy Commander's good-bye letter to the District Team

by Col. Andrew B. Nelson
Deputy District Commander



I have found it to be very difficult to sit down and write this note in spite of a number of gentle reminders and have finally come to the realization that it will be personally very hard for me to leave the New England District. Not only because the New England Dis-

trict has an exciting mission, great facilities, and is a fun place to work, but, more importantly, the New England District is a team full of people who care about the mission and each other, work hard to accomplish the task at hand, and look to enjoy the process along the way. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know each of you that I have had a chance to work with and am a better engineer and leader because of your influence and example.

This team welcomed me and my family four short years ago and quickly integrated me into the mission and

business process. I had the opportunity to travel across New England and experience the results of your great work first hand; at operating dams, navigation projects and the canal, at completed environmental restoration projects, wetland mitigation sites, completed Military Construction projects and work for others, as well as Superfund and remediation sites. At each location, I found professionals who were proud of what this District has accomplished and I am proud to have been a member of this team.

I am thankful for your friendship and will always look upon my time in New England fondly. In 23 years of service with the Army, I've not had any experience that I enjoyed more than being the Deputy Commander of New England District.

I will miss this District and all of you profoundly. I wish you all the best as you continue to pursue excellence in service to our nation and I look forward to watching your successes. I ask that you give Lt. Col. Stephen Lefebvre the same welcome and support that you afforded me. He won't let you down.

ESSAYONS!

Wounded Warrior Making a Difference at Hop Brook Lake

By Reese Piper
Hop Brook Lake

The Army Corps of Engineers at Hop Brook Lake brought together a group of home schooled children with a Wounded Warrior for an interpretive program about birds, May 2.

As part of the program, Sgt. Jeff Luca, who recently came to work for the Corps as part of the Warriors in Transition program, spent a few hours teaching children ages 2 to 12 how to make bird feeders. The interpretive program is only one of a variety of tasks performed by Luca while assigned to Hop Brook Lake.

The interpretive program started with a PowerPoint presentation given by Ranger Reese Piper. After a brief question and answer session, the children were presented with pre-cut pieces of wood and a set of wood screws. Luca, Piper, and volunteer Nick Corella assisted the children in assembling the feeders. The children were later shown how to make feeders from empty milk cartons and 2-liter bottles.

The children lined up as Luca drilled holes in the bottles so they could be hung. Piper cut openings for the perches, and Corella put in the wire. Crayons and markers were used to color the wood feeders, while different

size holes were cut into the milk cartons. When their mothers gathered them at the end of the program, each child wore a smile on their face as they left with their newly made bird feeders.



Sgt. Jeff Luca, a participant in the Warriors in Transition Program, helps a child assemble a bird feeder during an interpretive program at Hop Brook Lake.

Luca said that he loved working with the children on the interpretive program, the first he has participated in since he started working with the Hop Brook Lake team this past April.

Although the injuries he sustained while fighting in the War Against Terrorism restrict him from performing certain tasks, Luca has found ways to make a difference in the lives of visitors coming to the District project and makes a positive impact at Hop Brook Lake with the projects he completes. "Sgt. Luca is a tremendous asset to the project staff and associated operations,"

said Christopher Way, Operations Manager for Naugatuck River Basin. "Having Sgt. Luca here provides benefits to the project, as we are able to get more work done at no cost to the project. His

presence also benefits the visitors because we are able to instruct/present programs, keep an extra eye on things to increase visitor safety and enjoyment of our facilities."

In return, Luca has found profound satisfaction from working with the public and the Hop Brook Lake Team. "In my short time working with the Army Corps of Engineers, I've been introduced to a wide variety of new things," he said about his experience so far. "I find myself looking forward to coming to work with my new found friends."

In addition to the interpretive program, Luca has also assisted

Hop Brook Park Rangers with events such as a recent fishing derby where he weighed and measured fish for contestants, recorded information, helped with registration, talked with the public.

Luca has also performed various tasks such as tractor work; spreading beach sand; putting in kiosks; helping put in buoys; painting trip hazards with yellow safety paint at the Stamford Hurricane Barrier; and assisting Ranger Piper create a wildlife database for wildlife surveys.

According to Luca, he enjoys the work he is doing and the working rela-

tionship he has with the Hop Brook Team. "Whether it's digging a hole with a backhoe or painting trip hazards on the Stamford Hurricane Barrier, I find working alongside the Rangers at Hop Brook Lake an enjoyable experience," he said. "Everyone is knowledgeable and patient as they teach me how the Corps works and operates. I look forward to working with the Corps over the next few months."

Luca is currently assigned to the Massachusetts Community Based Health Care Organization (MACBHCO) in Concord, Mass. Prior to that assignment he served overseas as a Military Policeman attached to the 18th Military Police Brigade in Germany. The New England District has partnered with the MACBHCO to provide meaningful work assignments for Wounded Warriors that are tailored to their special needs while they convalesce from injuries sustained while serving the nation.

Luca is expected to complete the Warriors in Transition Program in late July and then will return to the 18th Military Police Brigade, hopefully taking fond memories of the Corps of Engineers with him. The Hop Brook Lake Team and members of the Naugatuck River Basin hope that if another candidate becomes available through the Warriors in Transition Program that he or she will consider working at the project. "The Naugatuck River Basin is proud to participate with the Soldiers in the program," said Way. "It's a win-win situation for everyone involved, and Warriors in Transition is a program that we intend to continue in order to help as many Soldiers as possible."



A paddler maneuvers through the waters during the Blackwater Dam Slalom race.

Annual Slalom race held at Blackwater Dam

**Story and photo by Karen Tyron
Franklin Falls Dam**

The annual Slalom races were held at Blackwater Dam on the weekend of April 19-20. The races attracted many spectators and racers from the New England area. Sunday turned out to be a beautiful day, sunny with a slight breeze and bug free, it was a perfect afternoon for the event.

The object of Slalom racing competition is to negotiate a rapid river course, defined by gates, without fault, in the shortest possible time. A paddler will receive a fault by not going through one of the gates, going through the gates the wrong way, or by touching any of the gates while going through it. If a fault occurs time is added onto the race time. The race day is broken down by class, Open class (open to all), Masters class (paddlers 49 yrs and older), Junior class (15-18 year olds) and cadet class (paddlers 14 and younger). Each paddler is permitted two runs and the best time is recorded.

The Blackwater Slalom race is made up of 24 gates and five of those 24 gates are upstream gates. The upstream gates are red in color and re-

quire the paddler to enter the gate traveling upstream in order to receive the points for the gate.

Paddlers must also paddle through gates in numerical order, in accordance with the direction established by the clear side of the number panels, (green gates downstream and red gates upstream). Penalties are assessed for touching or missing gates which are added to the running time in seconds for a total score for the run.

Winners are announced after every class is finished. Participants and spectators alike said this year's weather and water truly made this event a success. In order for an event like this to happen downstream of Blackwater Dam Park, Ranger Victor Ranfos had to make 16 gate changes over the course of the weekend. In order for each race to be fair, paddlers must all paddle when the river is at a constant speed, which ended up being 700 cfs.

Overall, during the day we regulated the water at 700 cfs and at night the flow was regulated at near normal levels to insure the pool was not affected too drastically. It's a great event enjoyed both by the participants and the Park Rangers at the Blackwater Dam.



Children get up close and personal with reptiles during the Take Your Daughters/Sons to Work Day.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Annual EEO, FWP Program increases in popularity with children

Over the years, the New England District's "Take Your Daughters/Sons to Work Day," sponsored by EEO and the Federal Women's Program, has become more and more popular with employees' children.

This year the event hosted a record number of boys and girls, aged 7 to 12 years on April 25, which was held at Concord Park headquarters.

Take Your Daughters/Sons to Work Day is a national event with companies all around the United States hosting children that want to see what their parents do for a living. "The program was designed to encourage girls and boys across the country to dream without gender limitations and to think imaginatively about their family, work and community lives," said Heather Sullivan, Federal Women's Program Manager.

Jackie DiDomenico, EEO Officer, said she was not surprised about the growing popularity of the event at the New England District. "We have a number of children that have returned

for several years because they have had such an awesome experience," she said. "I believe that since we began publishing a detailed agenda with a brief description of each project, participation in the program has increased."

Nearly 40 children gathered into the Concord Park Cafeteria where Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, welcomed them and talked a little bit about the day's program. "Your parents work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but they are civilians," he said. "We do things here that save lives and help the environment. It is our hope that we will show you what your parents do every day to protect the nation."

After the opening remarks, the children started their day with an icebreaker. Sheila Harvey passed out puzzle pieces with questions on them to each child. The participants then had to answer the questions on the puzzle piece and find the person with the matching half. After finding their match, the children switched pieces and intro-

duced each other to the entire group.

Following the icebreaker, the children were split into three groups that would rotate through the first three activities.

Park Rangers Steve Patchkofsky and Michelle Dwyer hosted a boat and water safety program, starring Seamoor the Sea Serpent. Seamoor, which is a remote controlled robot, teaches children (and adults) about water safety, swimming with a buddy, swimming in designated areas, and the proper way to wear a life jacket. The program also included an opportunity to climb aboard one of the Corps' vessels that the Park Rangers use to assist visitors in trouble. David Hanna said he really enjoyed the program. "I liked learning about the different safety tools on the boat like the horn and the flare," he said.

Park Ranger Marci Montrose, who is also the District's 2008 Interpreter of the Year, gave a critters and snakes presentation. She was assisted by Robert Cannata, a Co-Op student in Engineering/Planning Division, who



Seamoor captivates his audience.



A gecko peers at his audience from Park Ranger Marci Montrose's hand.

brought in his own turtle, "Mustapha." The children were allowed to view and touch a snake, two turtles and a gecko. Montrose gave the children interesting and educational facts about each animal they observed and touched. To the delight of one lucky group, they even got to see the snake feed.

Park Ranger Jason Tremblay rounded out the morning's activities with an interactive watershed model program. Tremblay used the model to explain what the District does as an agency with flood reduction management and water resources.

The model is designed to replicate the Ashuelot Watershed of the Connecticut River and illustrates the water bodies, mountains and tributaries. The presentation gave children an idea of the difference between the rivers where the District has flood reduction projects and the rivers without. Chris Colvin seemed impressed with the model. "I really liked seeing how the uncontrolled water went over the dam," he said.

After a pizza lunch, the children returned to their groups for three more programs. Park Ranger Samantha Mirabella, assisted by Park Ranger Willis Loper, operated the marine life



Richalie Griffith and her helpers construct a foundation.



Park Ranger Samantha Mirabella hands a participant a star fish from the touch tank.

touch tank, which was filled with "critters" caught just outside the Cape Cod Canal. The children were allowed to touch and hold the marine life, which ranged from hermit crabs to lobsters, and learned some fascinating facts about each animal. Dan, Nick Colvin and Sean Hanna particularly liked the touch tank. "I liked touching all of the animals and learning about them," said Dan. Brother Nick said that his favorite animals were the Hermit crabs. Sean brought a camera with him to detail his day at the District and snapped a lot of pictures of the touch tanks. "I got some great pictures of the animals in the tank," he said.

Richalie Griffith and Janet Hall challenged the young participants to design a foundation that would not fall or break during the shallow and deep foundation presentation.

Griffith used wood for the foundations. Then each group of children had a project site, which was a layered mix of rock, sand, and topsoil. That is where they experimented with different foundations. The "project site" for the house was the challenge at the end of the presentation.

Each group had to use only four



Park Ranger Jason Tremblay (right) operates the Interactive Watershed Model.



Ben Loyd and a participant show off a fish print.

foundation types to be able to withstand 40 lbs. That project site was comprised of rock, clay, topsoil, and swamp.

Ben Loyd and Sheila Harvey hosted a fish print activity as the final program for the day. Children learned about the biology of several types of fish. Following the brief presentation, the children were allowed to make prints of several species of fish using real, frozen specimens by painting them with their choice of several colors and rolling them on paper.

While all of the presentations received rave reviews from the children, not everyone could pick a clear favorite. "I liked the touch tank because I like learning about all of the different kinds of animals," said Lauren Acone. "I liked the foundation presentation because I like building things and I liked the Seamoor and water safety program because I like boating and driving boats."

In addition to DiDomenico, Sullivan and the presenters, the following employees assisted with the event: Will Pumyea, Tina Chaisson, Ann Marie Harvie, Joan Gardner, Bonnie Ortiz, Cindy Hanna, Gary Morin and Brian Murphy.

...Environmental review of South Coast Rail Project

continued from page 1
required.

An EIS determination is made when the lead federal agency finds that the proposal represents potential significant environmental impacts and represents a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The Corps made its determination to conduct an EIS on May 7, 2008.

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requires that EOT evaluate the project and its alternatives and identify all feasible measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impacts.

Officials tentatively project that a notice of intent to prepare a Federal EIS will be published in the Federal Register in September 2008 which would be followed by joint Corps/MEPA-sponsored scoping meetings in the fall of 2008. Scoping meetings provide an opportunity for the public, interested groups and local, state and federal agencies to note all potential issues or concerns of the proposed project. These issues and concerns will help shape what is studied in the EIS/EIR.

"This is a joint endeavor to understand all the impacts – direct, secondary and cumulative – of this proposed project, and to fully and fairly evaluate alternatives. In the interest of good government, the Corps and MEPA will collaborate in the coordinated review of the EIS/EIR," said Christine Godfrey, the Chief of Regulatory Division at the Corps' New England District. "As lead federal agency on the EIS/EIR, the Corps looks forward to working with the other federal, state and local resource agencies and the public on under-

standing all the impacts associated with this proposed rail project as it pertains to the transportation needs and smart growth initiatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

The EIS/EIR is expected to be completed by spring 2010 depending on the complexity and range of the issues involved and the studies that may be required. Officials expect to build on the information that is already available and the studies that have been conducted in the past.

"For a large and complex project that requires both state and federal approvals, a coordinated environmental review is the best way to bring all the relevant information to light for public comment," said Deerin Babb-Brott, Director of the state MEPA Office. "Secretary Ian Bowles appreciates the Corps' willingness to undertake this coordinated review, and I look forward to working with the Corps throughout the process."

The Corps has been part of an interagency review team since September 2007 working with federal, state and local agencies involved in the review of this project.

Wendy Stern, Undersecretary of Transportation for the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, added, "We are very appreciative that the state agencies and the Corps have established an excellent cooperative process on a project that is of such importance to the Patrick-Murray Administration. Secretary Bernard Cohen and I look forward to working with the Corps, MEPA, and all the environmental resource agencies to make this the best possible project for the South Coast and the Commonwealth as a whole."

More information is available on this proposal from the MAEOT at the website: <http://www.southcoastrail.com/>.



Manning doing good work in Iraq

John Manning, one of New England District's Realty Specialists, stands in front of the famous Crossed Sword Parade Ground in the International (formerly called Green) Zone in Iraq. Manning has been serving in the middle East since January. He recently participated in the U.S. Marine's Lease Week, an event which allows property owners whose land is being used by the Marines to be compensated. Manning signed a whopping 1,006 leases totaling \$2.4 million in a three-day period. Manning is enjoying his work so much, he has extended his tour. "I find it interesting to learn about the culture from the local nationals who work for us!" The Realty Specialist is scheduled to return to the United States in January 2009.

Col. Thalken's Farewell Message to the New England District Team

continued from page 3

tensile and compressive forces, can all be derived from this simple statement. I see a parallel to this in our relationships with the communities of New England. Engineering problems in need of an engineered solution are plentiful in New England and we can try to convince (or push) communities to accept our solutions. However, unless a community can see the benefit of our proposals and has the means to meet the initial construction cost share and long term maintenance requirements, the project will not move forward.

The community must agree with our proposal and ask (pull) for our involvement. So, look for communities "pulling" and don't "push" solutions that are not sought.

Second; "water runs down hill." This simple statement of fact is critical to the design of any water resource project, but it is amazing how often engineers "fight gravity." Opposing water's forces is a difficult and costly proposition.

As I have progressed through my career I have tried to coach younger engineers not to "fight the forces of water," but help it to "go where it wants to go" (usually down hill). Stated another way, the simplest solution is often the best. In most cases, the simplest solution involves the simplest construction technique and is therefore more likely to "stay on budget and on time." It also will most likely involve the easiest maintenance for the end user.

Third; "dirt and mud make more mud." Or in more technical terms it is a difficult (and costly) process to make unsuitable soils suitable to build on. The parallel for the district I see is: if it didn't work the last couple of times we tried to do it that way, what makes us think

it will work this time? My challenge for the District is to challenge the way we do things. The statement that we have always done things a certain way should not immediately be accepted as the reason to continue past practices. Start with the assumption we can do it better now and look for a better way, if not,

conclusions that both enhance public safety and protect the environment.

So in conclusion, thank you one last time for allowing me the opportunity to share some observations from my time here.

My time here in the District has been one of the most memorable experiences

'My time here in the District has been one of the most memorable experiences of my Army career. Not a day has passed that I have not learned something new about how the Corps operates.'

- Col. Curtis L. Thalken, New England District Commander

the old method may still be the best, but start with null hypothesis that it can be done better.

Fourth; "concrete draws a crowd." This was meant to add a little humor to wrap things up, but as always Sgt. 1st Class Duke's observations had an element of truth.

For a troop unit, large concrete placements were a rare event so whenever they occurred, everyone all the way up the chain of command wanted to be present to provide their advice on how to conduct the work. Here in the District, our big projects and our big permitting actions also draw a crowd. The larger the project, the more people affected and, therefore, the more likely it is that differing opinions will occur. Our NEPA and regulatory processes have been established to ensure we can demonstrate a rigorous and transparent process that allows us to reach

conclusions of my Army career. Not a day has passed that I have not learned something new about how the Corps operates.

Thank you for the support each and every one of you has provided me. Our programs are growing, our processes are more efficient, and our reputation as team players, within NAD and USACE, as well as with our external partners has been enhanced.

Our customers are happy with our results and most importantly, the people of New England trust the District to help protect them from nature's fury and unwise impacts to the environment.

You have truly proven you don't have to wear a uniform to be "Army Strong."

Thank you, and good luck in the future.

ESSAYONS!



Buffumville Dam and Flood Damage Reduction Project under construction.



Officials break ground on the project.

Special Report

Buffumville Dam and Flood Damage Reduction Project turns 50

**Story and photos provided by
Jamie Kordack, Buffumville Dam**

The site where the village of Buffumville, Mass., was established was first developed as a mill seat in 1812. The 183-acre tract was situated in both Oxford and Charlton. In that year, brothers Alexander and Jonathan Nichols built a dam and sawmill on the Little River. In 1815, they built a two-story house, and in 1818, a gristmill. In 1823, the mill, house and scythe making and blacksmithing shop, plus 29 acres of land were sold to Sterns Witt. "Sterns Witt and Brothers" began making cotton thread in part of the grist mill. For a short time starting in 1832, axes were also manufactured at the mill. As thread manufacturing increased, for a time, spools were also made. On 25 May, 1842, the mill was burned and business suspended. The present brick structure was built in 1847 when the property came into the hands of Charles L. Harding, who fitted it for the manufac-

ture of broadcloths and doeskins. This business continued until 1852 when he sold it to Moses Buffum and Edward Thayer, Thayer moving on in 1855.

The village got its name from Moses Buffum, a successful miller and businessman, who was born July 10, 1800, in Smithfield, Rhode Island. He began a hat making business in Slatersville, Mass., at the age of 18, and soon became a part-owner of a satin mill in Millville, Mass. He became the sole owner of that mill in 1834, and continued to enlarge his business until the mill burned in 1849. In 1852, Moses Buffum relocated to Oxford (now the South East corner of Charlton), Mass., and ran the mill manufacturing cassimere's (fine woolen goods). The community around his mill became known as Buffumville. Moses continued in his milling business on the Little River at Buffumville until his death in 1874. Moses Buffum was a prominent business man in Oxford. In his "History of the Town of Oxford" (1892), George Daniels has

this to say about Moses Buffum: "He had a good business ability and tenacity of purpose, was conscientious and careful for the rights of others, early an anti-slavery man and a Free Soil voter, and was highly respected by all. He was among the most successful businessmen of the town, and died wealthy."

The mill still exists on the shore of Buffums Pond and is home to many businesses.

According to the book, "History of the Town of Oxford, Massachusetts with Genealogies and Notes on Persons and Estates," by George F. Daniels, in the 1920's, on the South West shore of the pond and along Gale Road, the land was subdivided into small "summer cottage" lots, called Community Park and Lakeside Park. The land scheme was to be the first of Charlton's subdivisions. Most were not built upon when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took over the area for its new flood damage reduction project. Before the project though, the Little River

had a section upstream known locally as Colicum Reservoir. Named for Colicump who was the last Nipmuck Indian residing in Oxford. He drowned while fishing in the Little River.

There was no such thing as a federal flood damage reduction dam before spring floods swept the Northeast in 1936. The devastation, including \$66 million in property damage and 11 dead, turned the political tide in favor of granting the federal government the right to seize land in one state to build a dam intended to prevent flooding in another state.

Floods continued elsewhere, especially on the Ohio River. Additionally, during the 1930s, there was the misery caused by the Great Depression. Flooding from the hurricane that struck New England in 1938, leaving 650 to 700 dead, coincided with the passage of a second federal Flood Control Act. Responding to the twin needs for flood protection and work relief, Congress passed the 1936 Flood Control Act, one of the most important events in the history of the Corps of Engineers.

As defined by the Flood Control Acts of 1928 and 1936, the role of government agencies was to build massive flood damage reduction structures to control the great rivers, protect coastal areas and prevent flash flooding.

For the first time, Congress declared that flood control was a proper activity of the federal government. The act put the Corps firmly into the reservoir construction business, despite earlier Corps' reservations about the effectiveness of reservoirs. It also established that a potential project's economic benefits must exceed its costs. Furthermore, the act specified the obligations that would have to be assumed by local interests before the Corps could begin certain projects. The 1936 act alone authorized construction of some 250 projects for both flood damage reduction and relief work.

Buffumville Lake Flood Damage Reduction Dam was one of over 30 dams planned for New England in that legislation or soon afterward. Nine fed-



The Buffumville Flood Damage Reduction Project today.

eral flood damage reduction dams were built in New England between 1941 and 1952. But as the devastation from the floods of 1936 and 1938 faded from memory, so did the zeal for pursuing construction of the remaining dams. Congress failed to appropriate funds. Meanwhile, negotiations continued over how Connecticut and Massachusetts, which would benefit most from the dams in Vermont and New Hampshire, would compensate those states which would lose thousands of acres - land that was the source of local property taxes - to the projects.

In 1953, the four states signed a Connecticut River Valley Flood Control Compact. The compact promised "that states benefiting from construction" of flood-control dams would "make reimbursement for such loss of taxes and for such hardships." Whether the states have lived up to that compact is still under debate.

And then came the hurricane season of 1955. According to a 2005 Hartford Courant article written by Madeline Bodin, in August 1955, Connie and Diane landed a one-two punch on New England. The floods killed 87 people and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage.

Newspaper editorials rued the unbuilt dams. Surely, they said, those dams could have saved lives in the storms. The year's floods had softened hearts in Washington, too. Federal funding was approved, and the pace of construction quickened.

During the 1955 flood, many manufacturers adjacent to the French River experienced extensive damage to their properties. The hurricane-induced flood caused \$61,680,000 of damage throughout the Thames Basin. The Buffumville Dam and Reservoir was the first of a group of four dams required to control the flow of the rivers. The others were East Brimfield Dam, Westville Lake and Hodges Village Dam. Had Buffumville and Hodges dams been in existence in 1955, \$17.1 million dollars in flood damages could have been prevented.

Buffumville Dam is located 1.3 miles above the point where the Little River flows into the French River. Completed at a cost of \$3 million, the dam is part of a system of six flood damage reduction projects designed and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Thames River Basin. This system controls flooding from Oxford, Massachusetts, to Long Island Sound. To date, Buffumville Dam has prevented damages of \$26.8 million (2006 data).

Buffumville Lake has a peak storage capacity of 5.2 billion gallons to minimize downstream flooding. At maximum storage, the flood control pool rises 42 feet above the normal recreation pool. This flood water is stored on approximately 500 acres of public land. The U.S. Government purchased the rights to store flood waters on another 273 acres of private land. Much of this flood easement lands borders privately-owned Pierpoint Meadows Pond.

In April 2008, Buffumville Dam turned 50. The multiuse recreation and flood damage reduction resource offers the public many things- protection from storms, many forms of recreation like hiking, fishing, boating, disc golf, and picnicking, a lovely green-space in the town of Charlton where folks can come out to relax and learn about their little piece of public land and finally, a place of and for commitment effecting a sense of belonging in the community.

On Aug. 9, there will be a 50th birthday party held at the dam site, complete with birthday cake and tours of the dam.

Dredging up the past . . .



Congressman Barney Frank cracks a joke during the New England Division's 50th Anniversary Celebration at the USS Constitution in this June 1991 photo.

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